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In The
ORGAN LOFTS *of* PARIS

FREDERIC B. STIVEN

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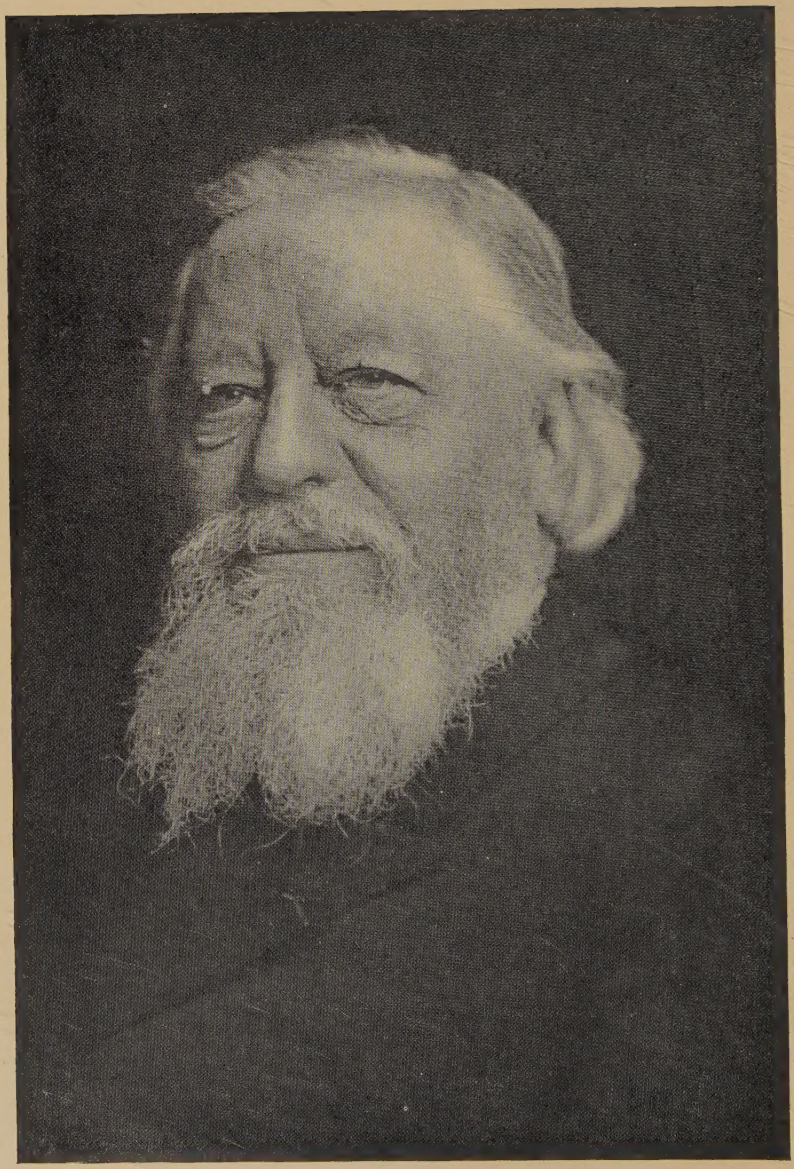

ALEXANDRE GUILMANT

In the Organ Lofts of Paris

By

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and Director of the School of Music
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1923

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Foreword

ONE of the things which strikes the American most forcibly in visiting Europe is the magnificence of the churches and the cathedrals. Particularly is this true in France. Every town, even many of the smaller villages, centers around a church of importance. Many of them date from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and are remarkable specimens of architecture. The cathedrals at Rouen, Chartres, Amiens, and the one at Rheims, which was so wantonly mutilated in the Great War, are marvels of grace and beauty.

In Paris there are seventy-eight parish churches including the Cathedral, and these, together with a few missions and private chapels, minister to the Roman Catholics, who number about 2,800,000. The smallest one of these parishes — that of the Cathedral church, numbers about 6,800, while there is one parish church which is supposed to have 96,000 communicants. It would seem that even with the

numerous services which the Catholic church holds, only a portion of the total number of members could be accommodated by this comparatively small number of churches.

Many of these parish churches are full of interest both historically and architecturally. Foremost among the larger structures comes the famous cathedral of Notre Dame, with its massive façade, its superb proportions, and its wonderful vistas. The old churches of Saint Sulpice, Saint Eustache, Saint Gervais, and the Madeleine, are scarcely less interesting, while there are a number of splendid newer churches, all of which have been built within the last hundred years.

In all of the larger European Catholic churches, there are two organs, one— the grand organ — situated in the balcony over the main portal of the edifice, — and the other the choir organ, placed near the altar and used for accompanying the choir. It is the grand organ at the rear of the church which is played by the organist, — the choir organ being played by the director of the choir — maître de chapelle, he is called in French. The grand organ is used

only for the instrumental portions of the musical service. Many of the greatest of the French musicians have held the post of the grand organist, and to be appointed to this position in one of the large churches of Paris is considered to be one of the greatest honors which can come to a musician. The financial recompense is very little, sometimes nothing at all. It has even been said that there is one organist in one of the largest Paris churches who is himself obliged to pay the men who blow the organ. For the American organist these monumental instruments have a special interest, for there are in this country very few churches with organs which can be compared to some of these Paris organs.

The Protestant church buildings in Paris are comparatively few and architecturally unimportant. By far the most imposing structure is the American Episcopal church on Avenue de George V. Another church, known simply as the American church, is to be found in the rue de Berri. It is here that most of the Americans who are not Episcopalians, worship.

At the time of the author's study in Paris,

the organist of the American church was a young man from Chicago, and in company with him he visited at different times during his two years residence in the French capital, the organ lofts of practically all of the larger churches and several of the less important ones. It was a wonderful opportunity not only to see the great organs at close range but to become acquainted with the organists, men of renown in the musical world, and, without exception, gentlemen of charming personality.

The present volume consists of a recounting of some experiences in gaining entrance to these organ lofts which are understood to be closed to the general public. It is the author's hope that they will prove as interesting to the reader as they did to himself and his friend.

F. B. S.

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF SAINT MARCEL

WHEN we first arrived in Paris, we were fortunate in having an American friend who had already been there one year, and who was, moreover, a professor of French in one of our middle-west colleges. From the very first he did not cease trying to impress on our minds the great advantage of utilizing every opportunity to acquire a working knowledge of the language. So on our first Sunday, when we had dreamed dreams of going to Notre Dame, or of hearing the wonderful organ at Saint Sulpice, our friend appeared early at our pension, to take us to the little French Protestant church around the corner. We slightly demurred, but he suggested that it would be a splendid opportunity to hear some good French, so we meekly followed him across Allée de Luxembourg, and down the little old street of Val-de-Grâce, till we came to a short intersecting street, rue Pierre-Nicole.

Here, next to the corner, was the church, built on a line with the sidewalk, and appearing quite like the apartment-houses which monotonously line both sides of so many Paris streets. We entered the central door; on the left, through glass doors, we could see the pastor's study; on the right, the room of the concierge, — for even a church must have a concierge. The service had only just commenced; the organist was wandering along in a meaningless improvisation, and the pastors had not yet appeared. How different was this little church from our American buildings! Everywhere was stone, — stone walls, stone floor, stone pillars. On closer inspection, however, we found it to be all artificial, — a kind of cement, very cleverly colored to represent real limestone. The gallery, extending across the back and about two-thirds down the sides of the church, gave to the building the effect of the cruciform shape, — a kind of transept being made by the discontinuance of the gallery. Rush-bottomed chairs took the place of our conventional pews.

Soon after we were seated, two of the pastors

came down the center aisle, preceded by two young men ushers, wearing black cotton gloves, and bright blue ribbon bows tied around their left arms. The ushers, stepping aside at the altar steps, allowed the pastors to take their seats at the side of the altar. They were father and son, — charming men, whom we later came to know well, both of them with a genuineness of manner and with a true kindliness in their courtesy that we did not often find in the average Frenchman.

Let me pause here to say a word about the third pastor of this church, for though Saint Marcel had a congregation of only about two hundred, there were three ministers to care for the needs of the people. He was an Italian by birth, and had married an Englishwoman. For many years had he served this parish, laboring with the few earnest working people, and gradually adding to their membership, until they had been able to erect this neat little building, and had become one of the strongest forces for Protestantism on the left bank of the Seine. And now at the advanced age of ninety-three, he was still serving his people, preaching every

third Sunday. He was very tall, erect as a man half his age, and his countenance beamed with an inner light, — the light of the Christlike spirit that pervaded his whole being. During the second summer of our stay in Paris, he died while on a visit to Italy, and was buried there in his native town.

Our experience in understanding the sermon that first day will never be forgotten. The minister talked slowly and with unusual clarity, as we afterwards discovered, but it was very infrequently that we could catch even a word, — and yet we had landed at Havre a few days before with a quite puffed-up idea of our knowledge of French. Two rather discouraged individuals emerged from the church that morning.

Through our American friend, I later met the organist, a young man of rather doubtful ability from Lille, who was a student of Composition at the Conservatoire. We became well acquainted, and he very kindly asked me to take his organ while he was on his vacation during the summer. We had been in Paris nearly a year, and our knowledge of French was considerably

greater than on that first Sunday, yet it was with a good deal of misgiving that I accepted his proposal and consented to serve in his stead during the two months of his absence. The organ was a new instrument, built not by a Paris builder, but by a firm in Lorraine, one of the provinces which had been lost in the Franco-Prussian war but which now has been regained by the French. There were two manuals and ten speaking stops, with several adjustable combination devices. The action was pneumatic, and very good in its way, too, despite the railing of the French organists against the newer inventions of the progressive American organ-builders. The blowing apparatus consisted of two enormous pedals in the Sunday School room back of the organ, which folded up ingeniously out of sight when not in use. When the organ was to be blown, the kind old man who pumped it would pull down these pedals and walk up and down on them, in a leisurely manner or with a very business-like air, as the needs of the bellows required.

My first duty in taking up my work at Saint Marcel was not the playing of a Sunday service,

but of a wedding. Both of us being curious as to what the ceremony would be like, I took my friend with me to turn my pages for me. I remember it was to be at twelve o'clock noon. We were on hand a few minutes before the hour, but we waited until nearly one before the concierge came to inform me that the cortège was at the door. Evidently the French have not the American superstition regarding a delayed wedding, for we later attended another wedding at Saint Vincent de Paul where the bridal party was fully an hour late in arriving.

On the entrance of the procession, I began playing the march, and on reaching the bottom of the first page of music, I found my friend whom I had brought particularly to turn my pages, down looking over the railing of the gallery at the bridal party as it entered. The wedding party was quite numerous, there being several maids of honor, ushers, flower girls, and a long line of relatives and friends, who occupied a goodly portion of the chairs in the nave. Just before the altar steps had been placed, side by side, two chairs upholstered in red vel-

vet. Here the bride and groom seated themselves, the bride in an elaborate white satin gown, and the groom in full evening dress.

After a part of the ceremony had been gone through with, the minister ascended the pulpit and preached a sermon. Then followed a lengthy ring service, after which I played an Offertory while two little girls in yellow with elaborately lace-trimmed baskets took up a collection. They passed the baskets first of all to the bride and groom, and we were amazed to see the bride carefully lift her long trained skirt, find her pocket in her petticoat, and taking out her purse, select a coin, which she dropped in the basket. Each one of the large party contributed something to the collection, all of which went to the poor fund of the parish.

Subsequent services on the Sunday mornings of that summer were experiences long to be remembered. There being no choir during the vacation season, I was alone in the organ loft in the back of the church, with no one to aid me should I lose my place in the rather complicated liturgy of the church, which was, of course, in French. Nothing of serious import

occurred, and those services have always been regarded as milestones in my progress toward the mastery of the French language.

SAINT EUSTACHE

THE church of Saint Eustache is situated in a quarter of Paris given over chiefly to commission merchants and to wholesale fruit-dealers. It is surrounded on three sides by ugly old buildings; so closely do they encroach on the massive pile of masonry that it is with difficulty that one can obtain view of the age-worn, heavy façade with its ill-shapen tower and incongruous pillars.

On the opposite side of rue de Rambuteau which skirts the church on the south, are found the Central Markets, Les Halles, which extend for a distance of several blocks. Almost deserted during the day and early evening, these markets begin to show signs of life and activity towards midnight when the gardeners commence to arrive with their loads for the morning sale. One by one the huge carts roll in, drawn by sleepy, stumbling horses, the driver often asleep in his seat, and the dingy lantern on the front throwing a flickering feeble light

on the dismal scene. It is very early morning when the business is at its height at Les Halles, — so early that by eight o'clock everything is sold, and the weary cart-horses are dragging their rumbling tumbrels back to the country. Only the refuse and dirt are left, and an army of street-cleaners, mostly women, soon have that loaded into wagons, and the street is washed and swept, until no trace of the morning's business remains.

When after a few weeks in Paris, we first went to the church of Saint Eustache, on emerging from the subway, we found ourselves in the midst of this cleaning-up. We waded through cabbage leaves, dodged the fat old women sweeping the gutters with their switch brooms, and picked our way over muddy, wet pavements, but we finally gained the front portal of the church. We were armed with letters of introduction to the organist, M. Bonnet, kindly given us by a mutual friend in America, and we had had minute instructions as to how to find the organ loft:—"Enter right-hand portal, open first door to the left, close door after entering, and mount the winding stairs."

We were successful in passing the numerous beggars on the steps, and finding the door on the left, we entered and closed it behind us, as we had been admonished to do. There we were in the inkiest kind of darkness trying to find the winding stairs, but feeling nothing but cold stone walls on every side. Finally my hand touched an iron-railing, — it was the guiding-rail of the stairs, so following this precious clew, we began to make our way slowly up a stone staircase of seemingly interminable length. Up, up we groped, our eyes straining to catch some ray of light or some indication of the entrance to the organ chamber. Suddenly we felt the end of the iron-railing, and after a moment's hesitation, we realized that we must be at the top.

Finding a low door, we opened it, stumbled through a dimly lighted passage, with uneven floor, and found ourselves in a rather large room which contained the bellows of the organ. Here four ill-kempt, dirty men, with leery eyes and uncombed locks, were going through the most astonishing gyrations. In amazement we stopped, to discover that they were the blowers,

and that this ancient mechanism was the blowing apparatus. Each man was standing on a huge pair of treadles, and holding to a bar at shoulder-height. This bar was pivoted in the center, and operated in a see-saw fashion as the man trod up and down on the treadles. When the whole organ is being used, these men go up and down at a lively rate, and are constantly being signaled to by the organist for more wind. The men ceased their work just after we entered, and seeing that we were strangers, and were looking about in a dazed fashion to get to the organ loft itself, one of them grudgingly pointed to the door, with a gruff "Par là." The door led us to one of the most inspiring sights that we have ever seen. From away up near the roof of this enormously high church, we looked down through the vaulted nave to the far-off altar, bathed in a brilliant flood of glorious sunshine, streaming through the ancient stained-glass of the lofty windows. The Mass had progressed as far as the Elevation of the Host, and arranged in the form of a hollow square, eight young men in their red cassocks and white cottas, were swing-

ing their incense lamps before the altar steps in absolute rhythm. The hushed silence, the perfumed haze of the swinging censers, the benediction of the beautiful sunlight, made a really wonderful sight. Ever after that did we bow our heads at the Offertory, the most sacred part of the Mass to the Catholic.

After having paused a moment, almost awed with the beauty of the scene, we made our way to the gentleman at the organ, and timidly presented our letters, with a still more timid "Bon jour, Monsieur Bonnet." When he perceived to whom the notes were addressed, the organist instantly began to hurl sentence upon sentence of his most rapid French at us, from which we were able to gather that he was not Monsieur Bonnet, that Monsieur Bonnet was in Germany on a concert tour, that Monsier Bonnet would be very sorry to miss us, that we should come again (when, we had no idea), and that if we wished to remain this morning, we were very welcome. With a feeble "Merci, Monsieur," we tried to appear intelligent and grateful, and began to examine interestedly the organ.

The organ at Saint Eustache is like most of the organs of Paris churches, rebuilt and enlarged from former organs. The keyboard is built into the main part of the organ, the organist having his back to the altar. A part of the organ is situated in a separate box at the back of the organ bench, extending out over the massive stone balustrade of the loft. This necessitates a rather complicated system of mirrors, in order that the organist may see the altar and the progress of the mass. The stops of the organ are arranged in three vertical rows on each side of the four manuals, and the knobs pull out at least six inches. This is an extremely clumsy arrangement, but the height of inconvenience is found in some of the stops, which are above the top manual, and which have to be hooked down when pulled out.

In order to effect any but the simplest changing of stops, it is necessary to have help in registration. The organist generally asks one or two of his visitors to pull certain stops which he is unable to manipulate, at stated times during the selection which he is about to play. Our chief duty, in the many visits which we made to Saint

Eustache, used to be to pull the "Sonnette," the stop connecting the signal-bell of the pumpers. When in full-organ passages the wind indicator would show that the bellows was not being fully supplied, he would motion to this stop, and one of us would push it back and forth vigorously many times. This wind indicator, which was nothing more than a small bar of lead at the end of a string hanging out of a hole in the side of the organ, would, after such strenuous measures, mount slowly, and the danger of the wind failing would be passed.

In subsequent visits to Saint Eustache, we had the extreme pleasure of knowing Monsieur Bonnet, who is not only a brilliant organist, but also a very charming young man. The organ loft was nearly always filled with visitors and admirers, to whom he was uniformly cordial, and he went about among them during the sermon, chatting with his friends, recalling experiences with his old Conservatoire comrades, and practicing a little English on us American lovers of the organ. He would generally greet us with "How are you to-day?" And after responding that we were very well, one of us would say,

"And how are you?" "Very much, thank you," he would beam in his charmingly broken English.

Saint Eustache, owing to its location, is a very poor parish, and every advantage is taken to gather in a few sous. During the eleven o'clock mass, Bonnet used to play a program of organ numbers, stopping in the middle of the program for the sermon. One paid three cents for a chair, and three cents for a program, and as there was generally a large audience, a goodly sum of money was gained in this way. On festival occasions, admission to the church is charged, and prices ranging from a few cents up to two dollars are paid for the privilege of hearing the Midnight Mass on Christmas eve.

LA MADELEINE

IT IS a generally understood thing that people enter the lofts of the Paris churches only on invitation of the organist. Many of the lofts are comparatively small, so that if free access were given to the public, they would be constantly thronged with visitors during the services, for from no part of a church can a view be obtained that is at all comparable with that of the organ loft. Without exception almost, the gallery surrounding the organ is situated over the main entrance of the edifice. Being generally on a level with the tops of the upright walls, sometimes even up amidst the vaultings of the Gothic roof, one commands a splendid vista of the entire nave of the church. Far in the distance one can see the main altar, lighted with innumerable candles, and often flooded with varied-hued light from the stained-glass windows.

My friend had tried once before to gain

entrance to the loft of the Madeleine, but had found the door to the stairway locked, and had been unable to get in. So when he suggested our visiting there, it was with the hope that my slightly better knowledge of French would prove in some way helpful in obtaining entrance to that locked door. Turning to the left after entering the main door from that magnificent portico of the Madeleine, we found the small door, a single panel with the one word "Orgue" printed on it in faded gilt letters. It was locked as before. Looking round about us, we saw over in the corner near one of the small chapels, a kindly faced little old woman in black, kneeling on a prayer-stool, holding in front of her a small red velvet bag. She was taking her turn at holding the collection bag for the poor.

My companion hinted that I might find out from her how to get in, so I quietly walked over to where she was kneeling, constantly repeating "pour les pauvres, Monsieur, 'dame," I dropped a few sous in her bag, and in my best French, I asked, "Madame, can you tell me the way to the organ loft?" "The door over there, Monsieur." "But it is locked, Madame."

"True, but you have been invited?" Parrying her question, I promptly asked, "Has Monsieur Dallier arrived yet?" Evidently judging from this that I either did not understand or that I was at least acquainted with the organist, she whispered mysteriously, "At the lower left-hand corner of the door you will find a little bell. Push the button three times and the door will open." With a murmured "Merci beaucoup, Madame," I threaded my way through the now rapidly gathering throng to where my friend was standing. Without a word I motioned to him, we went back to the door, I found the button hidden down in the dark corner, and on doing as Madame had directed, the door noiselessly opened inward. Glancing back to see the astonishment depicted on my friend's face, I told him to follow me, and we began to ascend the stairs. We had scarcely started when a voice called down from above, "Who comes? Monsieur Dallier?" Quick as a flash I responded, "No, a friend." Back came the voice, "Good! Mount!" So we "mounted." Unlike that of Saint Eustache, this stairway is electrically lighted, and we were rather startled

to see a guard in uniform at the top. Remembering that politeness and amiability go a long way with the Frenchman, I smiled at the "Suisse," and with a "Bon jour, Monsieur," I asked, "Monsieur Dallier, will he arrive soon?" "Tout-de-suite, Monsieur; entrez, s'il vous plaît."

The Madeleine, or church of Saint Mary Magdalene, unlike many of the Paris churches, is of Renaissance architecture on the interior; the exterior being in the style of a Roman Temple. It was built on the foundations of a church which was started in the eighteenth century. In 1806 Napoleon began the erection of the structure, intending it for a Temple of Glory. When Louis XVIII ascended the throne, he continued the building with the idea of making it an expiatory church in memory of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. The Madeleine was finally finished in 1842, under Louis Phillipe.

Several things strike one forcibly on looking down from the organ loft, especially the absence of windows. The entire church is lighted only by four round skylights placed at regular intervals in the ceiling. The decorations are dark

THE INTERIOR OF THE MADELEINE AS SEEN FROM THE ORGAN LOFT

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and badly faded, and the chandeliers hang from the ceiling by long ropes, black with age.

Having gained access to the organ chamber, I expected that my duties would be over, for my friend had seen and heard Dallier at several concerts, and he had volunteered to make ourselves known to him. I asked him to describe the man, that I might recognize him when he entered the loft. About the only thing that he could definitely remember was that Dallier had light hair. When, therefore, a young gentleman with bright yellow hair entered, went over and put his hat and gloves on the organ console, I whispered loudly to my companion that Dallier had arrived. But he shook his head, and whispered that he was positive that Dallier was not young, and that his hair must have been gray instead of light. While we were debating whether or not this were he, a rather small man of some sixty years, with gray moustache and hair, quietly walked in, went immediately to the organ, and began making preparations for the service. Seeing two strangers over in the corner of the chamber, he slipped down from the organ bench, and coming over to us, greeted

us cordially. It was all so sudden that my French took flight, but I managed to grasp a few fleeing words and make him understand that we were two young American pupils of Guilmant. Then with gathering courage, I meant to say that we should be very glad to have the opportunity to hear the organ, but alas! French verbs were again my down-fall, and I blundered out, "Monsieur, we don't mind at all if we hear you play!" With the usual imperturbability of the Frenchman, he kindly responded, "Enchanté, enchanté, Messieurs."

The organ is a rather large three-manual instrument of some sixty stops, quite after the pattern of most of those built by Cavaillé-Coll. For a Postlude to the Mass that morning, Dallier played the Bach Great G minor Fugue. He started it at a terrific tempo, and as the console of the organ is in such a position as to render it impossible to hear clearly what is being played, it was difficult to follow the music. A young lady standing just in front of me as we were grouped around the organ, had volunteered to turn the pages. The first page was turned very nicely, the second she turned

barely in time, and before he had finished the third page, she had completely lost the place, and ignominiously fled. That left me the only one on the right-hand side of the organ. I, too, had lost the place, but I noticed a pedal-passage on the last line of the page preceded by a rather lengthy rest. Knowing that it was impossible to distinguish even the very marked theme of this fugue on account of the frightful acoustics, I watched his feet, and when he commenced to play this passage, I hurriedly turned the page, and saved the day. We have heard the organ from below, and there is scarcely any of this blurring noticeable. It must be exceedingly trying to the organist to be unable to distinguish anything that he is playing.

The Madeleine may be called the fashionable church of Paris. Of course it attracts many tourists, but one may see here at nearly every Mass a goodly number of people who come to worship, and not, as we were come, to satisfy our curiosity.

Two of the most famous French musicians of the present day have been organists at the Madeleine, — Camille Saint Saëns, and Théodore

Dubois. Saint Saëns was for many years always at his post, and he maintained a high standard of dignified and appropriate music for the church service. It is said that once one of the clergy at the Madeleine came to Saint Saëns rather objecting to the classical music played by him, and asking him if he would not play lighter music, — some of the airs from one of the popular operas then being played at the Opéra Comique, for instance. Very gravely Saint Saëns replied: "When I see one of the ballet dancers from the Opéra Comique dancing on the steps of the altar, then I shall be glad to play the airs from the opera for you in church, but until then I shall continue to perform what I believe to be suitable music for the worship of God."

SAINT GERVAIS

WE ORGAN students did a part of our practicing each week on the small organ which Cavaillé-Coll has built in one of the rooms of the concierge's house near the gate of his organ factory in Avenue du Maine. The main gateway was kept closed, but the door at the side was often unlatched. If perchance the concierge had remembered her duty, which was to watch the gate, and had locked the door, we were obliged to pull the bell at the side, and looking through the small square aperture in the door we could see the room where the concierge was sitting, watch her reach over and pull the cord that opened the door, and then resume her knitting. There were two doors from this little corridor, one leading to her room and the other to the courtyard, whence one could enter the small organ room. But when we were not in a hurry we always went in for a chat with Madame La Concierge.

She was a young, rather comely woman, with

rosy cheeks and intensely black hair. Her husband was one of the workmen in the factory, and she eked out his small wages by guarding the door and keeping record of the students using the organ. We were her favorites, for we sympathized with her great sorrow, — her six months' old baby girl had been taken from her. She had been forbidden to keep it at the gate lodge, so some kind relative in central France had offered to take the little child. It was too far for her to go to see the baby, and when, in the winter, the child was once very ill, it was pitiful to hear her pour out her worries to us.

She was an immaculate housekeeper. This one room was the whole house, with the exception of the typical small kitchen which the French do not dignify by the name of room. In a kind of alcove stood the bed, with a knitted white spread, faultlessly clean. At the head of the bed was hung a crucifix, and on the mantel piece stood a small statue of the virgin, with two candlesticks on either side — a kind of home altar before which, no doubt, the poor little mother pleaded for the life of her child. The

dining table in the middle of the room served also as a center table, and was covered with a heavy cloth when not in use. With a few chairs, the furniture of the room was complete. Nowhere was a particle of dust to be seen — everywhere the same neatness that characterized the simple black dress, and the spotlessly white apron of this young concierge.

The room adjoining hers contained the organ, a two-manual instrument with an ornate case of white enamel — an example of the modern French salon organ. The person who had engaged the hour preceding mine was a young Frenchman, with a most genial smile and kindly manner. We soon became acquainted, and when, on one day, he invited us to go with him to see the organ at the church of Saint Gervais, we were glad of the unusual opportunity. He had been writing an article on this organ for an Art Journal, and had free access to the organ chamber. Like most of the large organs in the less important churches, it is used only on the great feast days of the church. I can scarcely imagine how it could be used even then, for it is the oldest organ in Paris, and for over one

hundred years it has undergone very little reparation.

Entering as we did at the rear door of Saint Gervais, we had a good opportunity to view the organ from near the altar, before ascending the loft. The woodwork is of carved oak, in the style of Louis XV, and it is nearly black with age. Going to the right of the main portal of the church, we perceived in one of the massive pillars a small door, and through this we ascended by a narrow, winding stairway, — each step of which was worn hollow. At the top, we reached a massive wooden door. After unbolting this and feeling our way along a dark corridor, we mounted several more steps and found ourselves in the room of the bellows.

There can be but few, if any, models of this ancient sort of blowing apparatus in existence today. There are six enormous separate bellows, resembling those of a forge. Four are located on the floor of the room, giving wind to the different parts of the organ which are played by the hands, and two, furnishing the air for the pedals, are fastened to the ceiling. Six long handles require as many strong men

to supply the power. So when we tried the organ, with only one sexton to blow it for us, it was quite ludicrous to wait until he would find the right bellows for a certain set of stops, and to be unable to play both hands and feet at once, as the poor man could operate only one handle at a time.

The keyboards of the organ are in a sort of niche, between the main part and a smaller part which is in front. There are five manuals and pedals, with thirty-seven stops. The bottom two keyboards each have some dozen stops; the third manual having the rather pompous name of Bombarde, boasts of but one stop; while the swell and echo organ have each two stops. Only the top two octaves of the upper two manuals play, the rest of the keys being simply painted on a strip of wood. And as if it were useless to waste the room, the builder has made the length of the keys of the Echo manual only half as long as those of the other manuals. When one thinks of the Echo organs of to-day, hidden off in some remote tower of the church and then hears these two stops whose pipes are inside the main organ with the others,

he has to use a very vivid imagination to suggest any effect of an echo.

The history of the origin of this organ is quite uncertain. It was rebuilt into practically the organ as it stands to-day, in 1760, by Clicquot, but there are data to be found in the sacristy of the church which speak of repairs to an organ of an earlier date. And one can still see on the backs of some of the display pipes traces of what have once been decorations. Some of the large bass pipes of wood bear faint markings of these same decorations, as if at some time they too had been show pipes. But in a report still on record in the archives of the church, it is specifically stated that Cliquot in rebuilding the organ in 1760 did not in any way change the pipes of the front of the organ, which Thierry had built nearly a century before. This seems to indicate clearly that these faded decorations, still distinguishable, must have been a part of an organ anterior to that of Thierry, which was probably built during the latter half of the seventeenth century.

It was at the church of Saint Gervais where so many of the famous family of Couperin played.

Nine different members were successively organists, extending over a period of more than one hundred and fifty years, dating from Louis who took the position in 1650. Dying at an early age, he was succeeded by his youngest brother Charles, who died in 1669, after having played only four years. It was not until ten years later that the other brother took up the position, — François called Sieur De Crouilly. François having had the misfortune to be run over and killed by a wagon, his son Nicolas succeeded him. Either he was not successful, or his duties as musicien de chambre to Comte de Toulouse were too arduous, for he soon yielded the post to his cousin François, the son of his uncle Charles. François the second will be remembered not by his ability as an organist, but by his extraordinary talent as a composer for the harpsichord. The most charming things ever written for that instrument have come down to us from his pen.

The next Couperin to be organist at Saint Gervais was Armand Louis, the nephew of François II, who has been called The Great. Under his administration, the organ was rebuilt

by Clicquot into the instrument substantially as we find it to-day. He met death in nearly the same way as his grandfather. Going one day from the Sainte Chappelle where he was organist, to his duties at Saint Gervais, he was knocked to the ground by a galloping horse and fatally injured. His son, Gervais François, was the last of this illustrious family to hold this post, which had been their heritage for so many years. A composer of no merit, he must have at the same time possessed considerable technical ability as a performer, for it is recorded that in 1810 "he was even applauded in the church, in spite of the sacredness of the place, by an audience who were transported by his masterly manner of handling the organ, imitating in an extraordinary fashion the rolling thunder and the human voice." One might judge from this detail something of the character of the music of that day, and the qualities of style demanded of a perfect organist, but from the present state of the organ at Saint Gervais it is difficult to conceive how he did it.

This organ, the only one of any importance historically in Paris should be removed from

Saint Gervais and erected in one of the national museums, for it is a perfect example of the art of organ building of the seventeenth century.

SAINT AUGUSTIN

IF THE church of Saint Augustin stood in an American city, it would undoubtedly be known as the "Flatiron" church. The architect has planned the church to fit the plot of ground between Boulevard Malesherbes and Avenue Portalis, which diverge from a small square in front of the church, and very skilfully has he erected a beautiful building. The structure is of modernized Romanesque architecture, and like practically all of the churches of Paris, the interior is in the shape of the Holy Cross. The chapels on either side of the nave are somewhat triangular in form, the first ones being no more than irregular shaped niches, in which monuments have been placed; the succeeding ones increase in size as they approach the transept, until the exterior walls of the last chapel join the extremes of the arms of the transept. A ground-plan of the building would quite resemble the form of an old-fashioned kite

in its outline. A huge dome of noble proportions rises above the crossing of nave and transept, and it is directly under this that the beautiful altar is placed, with marble steps leading up to it, — the whole being covered with a sumptuous canopy.

The entrance steps of Saint Augustin were always crowded with pitiable beggars and old women selling shoe-laces and buttons, and it was with difficulty that we succeeded in passing these poor creatures on that bright spring Sunday morning when we visited this church for the first time. It was a morning in early May, — the sun was shining with that wealth of light which seems to more than repay one for the dreary days of a Paris winter. The foliage of the trees and shrubs in the neighboring square was in full leaf, the streets were thronged with gay, happy people, — what can be more lovely than Paris on such a day in the spring-time? The unfortunate beings on the church-steps were the only blot on the joyous scene.

We reached the organ loft at a quite inopportune moment. The Host was being exhibited

at the altar, and all of the large company gathered in the organ chamber were kneeling in prayer. Near the entrance door of the loft was one of the clergy of the church, a man dressed in the gown it is customary for them to wear when not officiating at a service, and on hearing the door open, he glanced up at us with an extremely annoyed look, a look intended to say that we were distinctly intruders, — as we were.

I had been all the time hesitant about going to Saint Augustin, because neither of us knew Gigout, the organist, or any of his friends, but my friend was quite persistent, so I had been over-persuaded. And now that we were there, and everyone was casting inquiring glances over at the two strangers in the corner, he whispered to me, "You ought to go up and speak to Gigout." What to say, I had no idea, until suddenly I thought of an organist friend in America who had often spoken of Gigout's playing, and of his having visited the church many times. So at the first opportunity, I quietly walked past the priest over to the organ and told Gigout that I was a friend of Monsieur B—— in America, that I had often heard my

friend speak of him, and that perhaps he might remember him. "Certainly, certainly, — enchanted to meet you; you are very welcome," responded most cordially the genial organist. I went back to my companion in the corner feeling much less out of place than I did when we entered.

When I related this incident to my organist friend on our return to America, I learned to my dismay that he had never even seen Gigout, but had always listened to the organ from below.

The Postlude that day was the Saint Anne's Fugue of Bach, and it was played in a masterly fashion, plainly demonstrating that this retiring, modest man is one of the very great organists of France. After the service we had an opportunity to examine the organ. It was built by Cavaillé-Coll and is quite like the other three-manual instruments which we had seen, except perhaps that it is one of more recent date than most of them.

After the death of Guilmant, the Committee of the Conservatoire National appointed Gigout as the Professor of Organ in that greatest of all

Conservatories. Having as pupils the most talented of all France, this master will undoubtedly produce some organists who will become as famous, and as splendid musicians as did his well-known predecessor.

SAINTE CLOTILDE

THE RIVER SEINE which winds itself through the heart of the great city of Paris not infrequently rises rather alarmingly during the winter, sometimes causing widespread disaster. The flooding tide of water fills the sewers, frequently breaks through the walled embankments, and leaves ruin and woe in its wake. It was during one of these floods that circumstances began to evolve which led to our seeing and hearing the great organ at Sainte Clotilde. The day that the rise in the River Seine became alarming, we had started home from shopping on the Avenue de l'Opéra, when at a station in the subway where we changed cars, we came on a mob of people in great excitement. Some were eagerly examining various bulletins posted in the station, some were rushing wildly hither and thither.

We found on inquiry that two lines of the subway had been forced to cease running trains

on account of the encroaching water. Fortunately the line which took us to our own station was still in operation, so we took the first train which arrived. It was the line which runs beneath the river, and we were filled with misgiving when we left the station at a crawling pace, and entered the tunnel under the Seine. More and more slowly the train dragged along, until suddenly it stopped altogether directly under the river. The water was pouring from the roof of the tunnel in torrents, the electric lights flickered and burned dim, and our misgiving rapidly turned to terror. In wild excitement some of the passengers ran to the doors, evidently with the intention of jumping out and seeking safety on foot, but the danger of the charged third-rail and the fast deepening water made them think better of that way of escape. For three dragging minutes, — minutes that seemed hours —, we stood there. Suddenly we felt the whirr of the motor, — the lights went nearly out, but we were beginning to move, and after what seemed an interminable time, we pulled into the St. Michel station, safe on the other side of the river.

The next day there was but one line of the Métro running, that line which crosses the Seine by a high-level bridge, coming out of the ground and becoming an elevated road for some distance before reaching the river. It was the day of a final rehearsal of the chorus of the Bach Society, of which we were members; to miss it meant dismissal from the chorus; to go meant decided risk in crossing the river, and a probability of not getting back to our apartments that night. But we were anxious to see the raging river from so advantageous a viewpoint as the bridge, so we went to the rehearsal.

For nearly a mile where the Métro is elevated, we could see people going about from one apartment-house to another in boats, rowing into the hallways in many instances. When the train neared the river, we saw the lamplighter rowing from one lamp-post to the next, and lighting the lamps without even rising from the seat of his boat — so high was the water.

At the Salle Gaveau, where the rehearsal of the Choral Society was held, there were no lights,—the electricity had failed,—so we sang the great Bach B minor Mass holding our books

in one hand, and a spluttering end of a candle in the other. Sharing the light of my flickering stub that afternoon was an Englishman, who by chance discovered that we spoke his tongue. He had lived in Paris since he was seventeen, had married a French wife, and had become almost more French than English. But he still retained his native love for the mother-tongue, and seemed to take special pleasure in being kind to us. On his invitation we joined, a short time later, another chorus, composed of about one hundred music-loving amateurs of the wealthier class of Parisians; and it was at a rehearsal of this chorus that we first met Monsieur Tournemire, the organist of Sainte Clotilde.

We were preparing to sing a Cantata by him, — a composition which had gained for him the Prix de Paris at the Conservatoire. A large amateur orchestra was to join forces with us, and Monsieur Tournemire had been asked to direct his composition as guest conductor of the two organizations.

Tournemire is a young man of small stature, with piercing black eyes. His hair and full beard are intensely black, and he at that time

was in mourning, — "en deuil," — black cravat, black shirt-studs, black cuff-buttons, black watch-chain, and black bordered handkerchief.

On the evening of the performance, he conducted his grewsomely entitled Cantata "The Blood of the Siren," with a great amount of energy. Unfortunately, a few of the orchestra were scarcely able to cope with some of the difficulties of the music. The members of the orchestra were arranged in tiers back of the chorus, and conspicuously placed on the highest tier were three long tubular gongs, to be used in a particularly dramatic part of the Cantata. When the orchestra reached the place in the score where the gongs were to sound, the man who was to play them was calmly gazing around the hall, utterly oblivious of the energetic signal which the conductor had given him. Then followed the most amusing, and at the same time, the most pathetic efforts to get the unconscious bell-ringer to come in when he should. Finally Tournemire succeeded, and the gongs began to sound as they were meant to in the score, depicting the far-off, ever-recurring summons of the Lorelei.

But this is all far from the church of Sainte Clotilde. On the strength of our slight acquaintance with Tournemire during these rehearsals, we went one Sunday afternoon to Sainte Clotilde to see the organ. Finding that the Vesper service was a half-hour later than we had thought, we strolled over to the little park in front of the church to see that remarkable statue in high-relief of César Franck at his organ. Then seating ourselves on one of the benches in the park, we turned our attention to the exterior of the church.

Sainte Clotilde is counted one of the finest modern churches in Paris. The façade is particularly attractive with its three fine portals in the Gothic style, surmounted by two lofty spires of elaborate stone-work. The three splendidly-proportioned arches forming the portals, give entrance not to the church itself, but to a wide portico extending across the entire central part of the façade. The entrance to the organ loft is from this portico, reached by a passage which, as D'Indy says, is as "steep and difficult as that which the Gospel tells us leads to Paradise." Continuing his description, he adds,

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CÉSAR FRANCK AT THE ORGAN OF SAINTE CLOTILDE

"First having climbed the dark spiral staircase, lit by an occasional loop-hole, we came suddenly face to face with a kind of antediluvian monster, a complicated, bony structure, breathing heavily and irregularly, which on closer examination proved to be the vital portion of the organ, worked by a vigorous pair of bellows."

That afternoon we found the blower-men idle, — the service had not yet commenced. One of them informed us that Monsieur Tournemire was then on his vacation, but that we were welcome to stay and hear his substitute, if we cared to. We found no one in the loft, but the organ was open and ready for use. With a feeling of reverence, we approached the instrument, for it was César Franck's own beloved organ, the one which he had played for so many years, for which he had written his great organ-pieces, and about which he used to say to the Curé of Sainte Clotilde: "If you only knew how I love this instrument,—it's so supple beneath my fingers, and so obedient to all my thoughts!" A three-manual instrument, built by Cavaillé-Coll, it is somewhat older than the majority of

the modern organs of Paris. About the only particularly distinguishing features are the stops. They have very large knobs, and pull out at least four or five inches.

While we were looking at the organ and talking of Franck, we heard a step in the corridor, and turned to see a young man enter the loft. He was very tall, even though he stooped noticeably; his curly beard looked peculiarly unkempt, and his clothes were ill-fitting and out of shape. He seemed startled to see anyone there, but almost instantly his face broke into a welcome smile, and he greeted my companion as if he were an old friend. As soon as I found the opportunity, I asked him who the man could be. At first my friend could not place him at all, then suddenly remembered that he was the bookkeeper at the piano house where he rented his pedal piano. He surely must have been a better bookkeeper than organist, for never had we heard such frivolity on the organ. His responses were sugar-sweet melodies with chromatic-run variations; his postlude was one of the short Bach fugettas which was far too short, so he added an improvisation in his own

style, aided by both of us, who gradually pulled on all the stops until he was using the full organ, and the great instrument was thundering out chords of the most commonplace description, which contrasted oddly with the Bach with which he had begun the postlude.

We were ashamed of it all; it seemed a desecration of the organ which held for us the greatest personal interest, but it taught us both a lesson. We resolved thereafter to be more careful in our selection of suitable music for the church service; to give more thought in making the musical part of the public worship more dignified and more sacred.

SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL

SINCE the separation of the Church and State in France in 1905, some of the Catholic churches in Paris have had great difficulty in existing. The appropriation of the state being entirely cut off, the attendance at the services growing smaller and smaller, at the same time there being a numerous clergy to support, as well as the enormous buildings to keep up,—all these facts have made it imperative that expenses be reduced at every opportunity. Very few of the organists receive any remuneration whatever, except the honor attached to the post of "organiste du Grand Orgue."

We were not surprised, then, to learn on entering Saint Vincent de Paul one Sunday that the grand organ was used only on feast days and for weddings. "But," said the sexton, "there is to be a fine wedding here on Wednesday at noon,—if you will come then, Monsieur Alexandre Georges will gladly show you the organ."

When, on Wednesday we arrived at the church at about three minutes before twelve, we found not a soul in the building except the sexton and an old man to blow the organ. No one seemed concerned about the wedding at twelve — it was evidently taken as a matter of course that the bridal party would be late. In a few moments, however, Monsieur Georges arrived, tall, erect, with closely cut Van Dyck beard, and kindly eyes, — a courteous, sincere gentleman. He has the misfortune to be decidedly deaf, so that it is very hard for him to understand the imperfect speech of foreigners. We mounted the staircase with him to the organ-loft, and waited fully forty-five minutes before we heard the clatter of hoofs on the pavement outside which told us of the approach of the wedding party.

During this time we had an opportunity to converse with Monsieur Georges. After we had talked about the organ a little, he took a newspaper from his pocket and asked us with an air of pride, if we had seen this article which he had written. It was the morning "Comoedia," and dealt with the unfairness with which the

less well-known composers were treated at the Opéra-Comique. For some time there had been a number of articles in this paper claiming that a few operas, such as Carmen, Manon, Werther, and La Vie de Bohème were given so very frequently that there was no opportunity for other operas which were not so popular. And Monsieur Georges' article was a complaint that one of his operas, even though it had brought splendid receipts to the box-office, had been produced only a few times, and then had been withdrawn. The managers of the Opéra-Comique answered by saying that the operas given were those most demanded by the public, and that these very operas against which there was so much complaint were the only ones which brought any money into the treasury of the house. Which, of course, was a very sufficient reason for continuing to give them.

To go back to Saint Vincent de Paul, — the wedding party at last arrived, and Monsieur Georges improvised a march by which they entered in slow procession, followed by a great company of friends. The service was rather elaborate, and the large organ was used a great

deal, so that we had an excellent chance to hear it. The organ is built in two sections, one on each side of the gallery, with the console between, facing sideways. It is another Cavaillé-Coll. You see his organs everywhere, until you begin to think that he was the only organ-builder in France. Indeed, it is said that there are only five organ-factories in all France, and of course his is by far the most important. It is interesting to know something of the history of this man. He was born in 1811, in Montpellier, a town in Southern France. When about twenty-two years of age, Aristide Cavaillé (Cavaillé was his real name, — Coll being that of his grandmother, which he took) came to Paris on a visit. He had been interested in organ building in his native town, and while in Paris, he heard one day of a competition which was open for the contract of building an organ for the Abbaye of St. Denis. St. Denis is the famous church just north of Paris, the burial place of Kings, where lies interred practically every ruler of fair France from the time of Dagobert II, who died in 638. But two days remained before the competition was ended.

Nothing daunted, this young Cavaillé-Coll shut himself up in his room, and at the end of the two days, submitted a specification so complete in detail, so carefully worked out, and involving so many new ideas, that the contract was awarded to him, a mere boy, utterly unknown to Parisians. Gathering some workmen about him, he set to work, and produced an instrument that astounded the rival builders in excellence of mechanism, and in quality of tone. Needless to say, he never returned to Montpellier; he was soon awarded contracts for other organs, and when he died in 1899, he had built organs for nearly every church in Paris, — beautiful instruments like this one at Saint Vincent de Paul, great monuments of harmony, making sacred the memory of a man who did more than any other to revolutionize organ-building in France.

SAINT SULPICE

IT WAS at the Vesper service of the Feast of the Assumption that we first visited the organ loft of Saint Sulpice. The August afternoon was hot and sultry, and most of the Parisians who frequented the Saint Sulpice loft must have been away at the sea-coast resorts, or spending their summer in the provinces, for we found Widor, the organist, alone. It was a long service, and as Widor is accustomed to having a large following of friends and admirers crowding about him at nearly every service, he greeted us — at that time strangers to him — with a kindly smile and a warm welcome.

Widor is naturally of an austere and serious nature. His eyes twitch noticeably, he has a nervous habit of almost constantly biting his lower lip, and when he glances at you from the corner of his eye, it is most disconcerting to one who is not acquainted with him. But when you come to know Widor you forget all about

these little peculiarities; you think only of the intense seriousness of the man, of his deep and far-reaching knowledge of music, of his great desire to impress most enduringly upon his pupils the broad foundations which are so necessary to the good musician. He of all the musicians of Paris, is the one most sought after by the aristocracy, particularly the older families of the nobility. It is not infrequently that one can have pointed out to him in the organ loft of Saint Sulpice a Count, a Marquis, or a Baroness. He conducts a large private orchestra for a Countess in Boulevard St. Germain. Notwithstanding, Widor is very independent in his dress. He wears habitually a small-cut blue serge suit, low collar and flowing blue and white polka-dot bow tie. An old-fashioned soft hat and an overcoat at least three sizes too small for him, make him appear almost grotesque when one meets him on the street, but there is something shining from his eyes, something in his determined manner that marks him as a man distinctly out of the ordinary.

His organ at Saint Sulpice is the largest in

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WIDOR AT THE ORGAN OF SAINT SULPICE

Paris, and one of the large organs of the world. To the American organist who is accustomed to an organ sometimes overloaded with mechanical contrivances, this Saint Sulpice instrument seems like an overgrown monstrosity, — a marvel of inconvenience. There are five manuals, and one hundred and eighteen stops, and but very few combination-pedals. The organ is built in seven distinct stories, and there are two separate blowing apparatuses, one requiring five men to pump, on a level with the main part of the organ, and another, some twenty-five feet higher, demanding two men to operate. The instrument has been rather recently partially rebuilt by the successor to Cavaillé-Coll, Charles Mutin.

We were naturally very much interested in the organ, and Widor took unusual pains that day to show us its beauties. There were in the service a number of interludes or responses to be played on the Grand Organ and for each one of these he would improvise with a different combination of stops, calling our attention to what he was going to do beforehand. We had thus a splendid chance to hear the beauties of

the flutes, the smoothness of the string-tones, and the effects of the different reeds.

When it came time for the sermon, Widor asked if we should like to see an organ once belonging to Marie Antoinette. Our curiosity being aroused, he led us back through the organ to a continuation of the entrance stairs, where we mounted to the floor above. Passing the two blowers of the upper bellows, we entered a large room where there were a great number of children dressed in white. Fond mothers were busily arranging filmy veils, putting on crowns of artificial flowers, and smoothing out the dresses of their children. As we passed through the crowd, Widor briefly remarked, "The children of the procession." At the farther end of this room was the organ, a quaint instrument of white and gold, with the ornate decorations of that period. The organ has one manual, four or five stops, and about an octave of very small pedals, — small pieces of wood about three-fourths of an inch wide and six inches long, the sharps being only about half this length. The organ was once at Versailles,

and had been preserved at the time of the sacking of the palace. The music desk was missing when the organ was presented to Widor by one of his admirers, but recently he has had one made of bronze. Both Mozart and Gluck had played upon the instrument, and doubtless Marie Antoinette had amused herself with it to while away those idle days which were leading to such dire disaster for the beautiful young Austrian princess. While we pumped the bellows by means of a small handle at the side of the organ, Widor played for us an air from an old Gluck opera, and we were delighted with the charmingly delicate flute-like tone.

On descending, we went into the little private waiting-room for the organist at the side of the big organ, where we sat and talked with Widor for some time, he going out from time to time to see if the sermon were over. He showed us an old etching of Händel given him by Edward VII of England, when he was Prince of Wales, also a very old architect's design of the façade of Saint Sulpice, utterly different from the rather imposing one of to-day. It is said that when the building was nearly finished, the architect

was so disappointed in its not realizing his expectations, that he climbed one of the towers and committed suicide by jumping off. Perhaps that is the reason why the south tower has never been finished.

When the curé had finished the sermon, we all went back into the organ loft, and Widor taking his place again at the great organ, began to improvise brilliantly in a march rhythm. The procession of the Feast of the Assumption had started. Leaning over the stone balustrade of the loft, we saw approaching far down the great center aisle, altar-boys in their red cassocks and white cottas, bearing lighted candles. These were followed by young men swinging burning censers in rhythm with the march. Then the young girls whom we had seen in the room above the organ turned into the aisle. Some twenty or thirty were marching together, two by two, the center ones of the group bearing a large banner from which wide ribbons were strung and carried by the first and last girls of the group. There were several of these groups of earnest young faces, and they made a beautiful picture as they marched proudly

down the long aisle, in their white dresses and flowing veils. Then came more candles, more censers, and finally the priests, — the younger ones first, followed by the older clergy, all garbed in the vestments of their office. But the culminating interest of the procession centered in the passing of the archbishop, who blessed the people, particularly the babies, as he slowly passed up the aisle, sprinkling holy water. He walked beneath a brilliant red and gold canopy, supported by four gold standards, fastened together some three feet from the floor by elaborate brass railings. These standards were on wheels, and the canopy was rolled by four acolytes carrying candles. Every few moments the procession would halt; one of the censer-bearers would bring his lighted vessel back to the arch-bishop, who would lift it aloft and swing it three times in front of him, letting it strike his breast. This he repeated from the four sides of the canopy, then would hand it back to the altar-boy, and the procession would proceed, the archbishop continuing to bless the small children who were held up to the railings of the canopy by their devoted parents.

The grandeur of the thundering organ, the wafting odors of the incense, and the touching solemnity of the helpless babes being blessed by the gentle, fatherly old priest, made it altogether a beautiful and impressive sight.

In other visits to Saint Sulpice, we had many opportunities to see distinguished people of all countries. Often Widor would be surrounded at his organ by his composition pupils of the Conservatoire, and he would talk very interestingly of his opinion of music and musicians. One day the tenor in the choir below was singing César Franck's "Panis Angelicus," which brought up a discussion of Franck's music. When asked as to his opinion of Franck's Oratorio, The Beatitudes, Widor said that he was very fond of the mystic, the religious ones, but that he thought that the dramatic and Satanic Beatitudes were very tame and uninteresting. "Franck was too good, too religious a man to write music depicting the evil one," said Widor. "Why, one time he wrote the music for a Ballet, but such a Ballet! You should have heard it! It was just after my Ballet, "Le Korrigan," had been put on at

the Opéra, and Franck was anxious that I should pass my judgment on his music. So I appointed a time, and he came to my apartment with his score under his arm. As he sat down to play it for me, he remarked with the utmost naïveté, 'I'm pretty sure about the rhythm of this Ballet, and I think one can dance to it very well, for last night I had my wife play it for me on the piano, and I danced to it before the mirror in my night-shirt!' "

Widor is one of the greatest of the older musicians of France, and it is a privilege to be associated with such men who have lived through years of such historic interest as have been those of the last half-century in France.

LA TRINITÉ

LA TRINITÉ is one of the new churches of Paris. It was built in 1861, and has none of the historic associations that gather around the old edifices which have stood for hundreds of years, in which have worshiped kings and emperors, which were desecrated and despoiled during the revolution, and which still stand, silent piles of age-darkened stone, monuments of the centuries past.

But La Trinité has an interest of its own, — it is the church in which Guilmant played. For thirty long years this greatest of organists was at his organ every Sunday, except when he was on his concert-tours; and he entered into his work with a devotion and a religious fervor that is all too rare. Chauvet was organist at La Trinité from the time the church was dedicated until 1870, when he was killed in the Franco-Prussian war. Guilmant was appointed his successor. After his resignation in 1900,

Charles Quef, the present organist was given the post.

It was therefore with a peculiar interest that we found our way up a broad, well-lighted staircase to the gallery where this organ is located. The organ, a Cavaillé-Coll three-manual instrument of some fifty stops, was rebuilt about 1892 by a rival firm of organ builders, and there are those who contend that it has been utterly spoiled. Of course, musicians who are patrons of the rebuilders exclaim over the excellencies of the instrument and the beauty of its tone. So far as we could judge it was quite like the other smaller organs of Paris.

Monsieur Quef is a very amiable, courteous gentleman with a very un-Frenchman-like eye for business. I had been in Paris scarcely a week before I received a card from him, announcing his terms for lessons, and the subjects which he taught. I found out afterwards that he obtained the names and addresses of all people who rented pedal-pianos of a certain delightfully naïve little Frenchman on Boulevard Péreire. Quite different from most of the French organists, Monsieur Quef is interested

in the English and German schools of organ playing, and it was he who played the only Mendelssohn which we heard in Paris.

The last time we were in La Trinité it was to attend a memorial service for Guilmant. About two weeks after his death, we received black-bordered invitations to this Requiem Mass given by the clergy of the church in his memory. It was at ten o'clock on a rainy Monday morning. Arriving a little early, we watched some workmen build a kind of sarcophagus in the main aisle of the church, — a huge affair covered with black cloth embroidered in silver and surmounted by candles. Nine priests officiated at the solemn Requiem Mass.

The memorial address was delivered by the curé of the church. He spoke in a clear-cut voice, beautifully modulated, with an astonishing rapidity. Never have I heard a more impressive address. One thing in particular I shall always remember. "It was not Guilmant's last illness," said the curé, "not his advancing age, that has robbed us of our beloved maître; it was the mortal wound which he received two years ago when his sainted wife passed on."

And I believe that was true. One day in looking over his engagement-book, Guilmant showed me the day which he had marked off sacred to the memory of his wife, — the second anniversary of her death. And when I played for him one of his Chorales dedicated to the "pious memory of my well-beloved wife," the lonely man, choking with sobs, told me of the depth of his grief. Then, pointing to the name of the Chorale on the first page, "But," said he, "'Was Gott thut ist wohl gethan.' I submit to the will of my Lord." Truly, there was in the soul of that man the "beauty of holiness."

At the conclusion of the Mass, the Guilmant family arranged themselves in a line in one of the side aisles, and the entire congregation slowly filed by, shaking the hand of each member of the family. During this, Monsieur Quef played Guilmant's remarkable "Funeral March and Seraphic Chant."

And so, the church of La Trinité is not interesting to us historically, or even architecturally, — it lingers in our memory associated with our beloved master, admired as a musician, and revered as a friend.

THE CATHEDRAL OF NOTRE DAME

A WHOLE year passed without our hearing the organ at Notre Dame. We had been in the Cathedral many times, admiring its vast proportions, the beauty of the wonderful rose-windows, and the strength of the enormous pillars; and we had climbed several times the rather easy and well lighted winding staircase to the towers, where, as Victor Hugo says, "on arriving out of breath upon this summit, the spectator is first of all struck by the dazzling confusion of roofs, chimneys, streets, bridges, squares, spires, steeples. All bursts upon the eye at once, — the formally-cut gable, the acute-angled roofing, the hanging turret at the angles of the walls, the stone pyramid of the eleventh century, the slate obelisk of the fifteenth, the donjon tower, round and bare, the church tower, square and decorated, the large and the small, the massive and the airy." We had also been taken through

the Treasury, where we had seen various gorgeous altar-services used in grand Festival Masses, beautiful embroidered robes, old tattered garments of Revolutionary days, — even a bit of the Crown of Thorns, and a nail from the Cross are said to be reverently treasured there, — but we had never chanced to be in the Cathedral on Sunday when the great organ was being played.

Having been told one day by a friend that the organist, Monsieur Vierne was of a very genial disposition, and welcomed heartily to the organ loft all who were sincerely interested in the organ, we decided to visit Notre Dame for the Sunday nine o'clock mass, at our first opportunity.

The loft is reached by the same staircase as the one leading to the towers. Going around to the side of the north tower, one sees the stone steps leading up to the caretaker's window. Here in a tiny room is ensconced a fat old lady always ready to take the umbrellas and packages of the unsuspecting tourist, giving him the impression that carrying such things to the tower is forbidden, and of course reaping a

substantial tip when the traveler descends, for so carefully guarding the articles. But the sight of Paris, the gliding river and the far-off hills, is well worth the few sous which one is shamed into giving on encountering her reproachful look.

This substantial-looking dame takes it upon herself to be the special guard of the "grand organiste," and no one can get past her unceasing vigilance unless he knows the Open Sesame, — "Monsieur Vierne." She seems to take for granted that one who knows his name must be his friend, and so on that day, with a smile and a kindly "Il est là," she let us pass, and we ascended the staircase until we came to the first door leading to the right. This brought us to a room containing a number of more or less mutilated statues which have been removed there from other parts of the church. In one corner our eyes fell on a small circular staircase of the most exquisite workmanship, leading to some unused passage high up near the roof.

Notre Dame, probably more than any other

of the French Cathedrals, contains a great number of mysterious passages and rooms. It was this fact which influenced Victor Hugo to write his great book Notre Dame de Paris, and one feels on beholding this staircase and gazing about this small, dimly-lighted room, that it might have been in such a place that Dom Claude had had his laboratory, with the suspicious-looking vials and the undecipherable inscriptions on the walls, or that Esmeralda had been hidden by the hunchback. Surely through this room she must have passed with her goat, in her nightly wanderings through the gloomy Cathedral up to the summit of the tower to look down on the sleeping city.

Passing through a door at the farther side of this interesting room, we went through the bellows-room to the main organ loft, where on entering we found three people with Vierne, — a young man, a young woman, and an elderly man. The latter seemed to be a particular friend and a devoted admirer of this very talented organist. He talked to him constantly, even while Vierne was playing, and on taking his leave, saluted him heartily on the two

cheeks. We felt quite out of place, and lacked the courage to go and speak to our host. Even though Vierne is blind, we were perfectly sure that he knew there were strangers in the loft; however, the people already grouped about him were carrying on such a lively conversation that we decided to await a more opportune moment to present our greetings. So we went to the balustrade of the loft, and stood looking down at the wonderful sight spread out below us.

The organ-loft is a few feet above the level of the triforium which extends over the whole width of the double aisles below. Long wooden platforms in the form of steps have at some time or other been built throughout the entire length of these high galleries, and they are still in existence. One could imagine at the time of the Coronation of Napoleon I, these steps crowded with a brilliantly garbed throng, looking eagerly down to catch a glimpse of the grand procession, and to see the Emperor who was to crown himself. Even though they were not able to distinguish the Man of Destiny and the Imperial Josephine, they could have seen the vast assemblage below, thousands of loyal

enthusiastic admirers of him whom they believed would restore their blood-stained Paris to its glory of former days. It has been said that over twenty thousand people thronged Notre Dame on such festival occasions.

Looking straight down the nave, we could see, over three hundred feet distant, the main altar, and the priests saying the mass, — so far away that we could hear nothing. Around the choir organ were grouped the choir of white-robed boys, with the "Maître de Chapelle" in the midst of them, beating time vigorously for them when they were singing, and trying in vain to keep them out of mischief when they were silent. Over on the right side of the Chancel sat the Clergy of the Cathedral, some following the mass with the utmost devotion, and some of the older ones trying to appear to do so in spite of nodding heads and ill-concealed yawns.

I remember once of standing just outside the great wrought-iron gates which lead out of the Chancel, and seeing the procession of Clergy pass out to the Sacristy, I was astounded at the age of some of these men. There was one

very corpulent old priest, asthmatically panting along, scarcely able to keep up with the procession, another, thin and haggard, bent with age and crippled with rheumatism, hobbled out through the gate, leaning heavily on a cane.

From the balustrade of the organ-loft, looking down below us, we could see a part of the great nave seated with the small rush-bottomed chairs and prayer-stools which are used in all the churches of France. There seemed to be a very small number of people in attendance at the mass, though there were probably many more than there appeared to be, — so vast is the space.

Suddenly the Great Organ began to play, and we turned back to the instrument. The case is of very dark wood, — almost black, and is quite elaborately ornamented and carved. The projecting towers, supporting the largest of the display-pipes are sustained by carved angels' heads, and it is curious to notice that one of these heads has been rudely hacked off, — probably a part of the desecration that took place during the Revolution. The organ has five manuals, and one hundred and ten stops.

It is a remarkable sight to see Vierne play. The way in which he runs his hands lightly over those long rows of stops, instantly finding the ones he wishes to use; the manner in which his hands fall exactly on the opening chords without the slightest hesitation; the marvelous memory of the man, — all seem to almost compensate for the terrible affliction of blindness which has come upon him. It was positively wonderful to watch him play a movement of one of the Widor Symphonies which has the melody on the pedal-organ. He played the right hand of the accompaniment on the bottom manual, and the left hand on the top one, five manuals away. The distance was so great that he could scarcely keep his balance on the bench, and yet he was playing a beautifully smooth melody with his feet, to say nothing of operating the various combination-pedals at the same time. He is truly one of those men who make you feel that after all, with all of your senses fully developed, you are a weakling in the presence of one who has lost that most precious sense with which nature has endowed us.

The tone of the organ in Notre Dame is

superb when heard from the loft, but from below the tones become blurred and indistinct. Nevertheless there is a splendor in the great mass of tone echoing about among those high-vaulted arches that reminds one of what Washington Irving says of the organ in Westminster Abbey: — "Suddenly the notes of the deep-laboring organ burst upon the ear, falling with doubled and redoubled intensity, and rolling, as it were, huge billows of sound. How well do their volume and grandeur accord with this mighty building! Now they rise in triumph and acclamation, heaving higher and higher their accordant notes, and piling sound on sound. And now they pause, and the soft voices of the choir break out into sweet gushes of melody; they soar aloft, and warble along the roof, and seem to play about those lofty vaults like the pure airs of heaven. Again the pealing organ heaves its thrilling thunders, compressing air into music, and rolling it forth upon the soul. * * * It grows more and more dense and powerful — it fills the vast pile, and seems to jar the very walls — the ear is stunned — the senses are overwhelmed. And now it is winding up

in full jubilee — it is rising from the earth to heaven — the very soul seems rapt away and floated upward on this swelling tide of harmony."

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